

**Neighborhood Ten Study
Committee Meeting #2
October 28, 2004
Neighborhood Ten Demographics and Neighborhood Survey**

Committee members present: Ravi Sundaram, John Moukad, Sandra Uytterhoeven, Peter Hiam, Peter Sturges, Joan Marszalek, Henry Lukas, Josh Rowland, Bill Forster, Rebekah Kaufman

Staff present: Taha Jennings, Elaine Thorne, Stuart Dash, Cliff Cook

Consultants: Ernie Paicopolos, Opinion Dynamics Corporation, Chris Murphy, Opinion Dynamics Corporation

Meeting handouts:

- West Cambridge Neighborhood Demographic Trends 1980 – 2000
- West Cambridge Residential Survey

Welcome and introductions:

The Study Committee welcomed Cliff Cook, Planning Information Manager for the Community Development Department, to discuss demographic data and trends in Neighborhood Ten and, from the firm of Opinion Dynamics Corporation, Ernie Paicopolos and Chris Murphy, to discuss the results of a random telephone survey of Neighborhood Ten residents.

It was pointed out that the survey and demographic information are a key part of the Neighborhood Ten Study process. The information will help better identify what is happening in the neighborhood, the attitudes and perceptions of neighborhood residents, and neighborhood trends and changes up until the present. Committee members were encouraged to think about ways the information presented matched their own experiences and perceptions of Neighborhood Ten. The Committee was also advised to use the information as a resource throughout the study process in order to make informed and useful recommendations for the neighborhood.

Demographics

Cliff Cook presented demographic information for Neighborhood Ten based on 2000 U.S. census data. The presentation focused on demographic trends in the neighborhood between 1980 and 2000. The categories that were analyzed were:

- *Population trends* (including diversity, density, age)
- *Household types* (family vs. non-family, place of residence, nativity)
- *Educational attainment and attendance*
- *Income and labor force data* (vehicle ownership, means of travel to work, income)
- *Housing data* (housing tenure, density, median rents, sale prices)

Data for Neighborhood Ten was compared to data for the entire City of Cambridge across all of the categories that were presented.

Of cities with a population over 50,000, Cambridge has the 10th highest population density. The City of Cambridge has very high educational attainment levels with a very diverse population. Cliff pointed out that this combination is not often found elsewhere in the country.

The City of Cambridge is becoming more diverse and more transient, while the opposite seems to be true of Neighborhood Ten. In other words, residents tend to stay in the neighborhood longer and the population is less diverse than the rest of Cambridge. Neighborhood Ten has a higher vehicle ownership rate compared to other areas of the City. This is consistent with higher income levels for the neighborhood. Neighborhood Ten also has one of the highest rates in the State of single people living alone. There was a question from the committee about how the demographic data has been used in other neighborhood studies. Another Committee member wanted to know how the trends apparent in the census data are driven by housing process.

Neighborhood Survey

Ernie Paicopolos, of Opinion Dynamics Corporation, presented the results of a random telephone survey of Neighborhood Ten residents that was conducted during the summer of 2004. It was noted that the survey was conducted June 24th 2004 through June 30th 2004, over the telephone, using a random-digit dialing method. Four hundred neighborhood residents were surveyed, with a margin of error of +/- 4.9%. The presentation focused on survey results that seemed noteworthy and interesting for the neighborhood including:

- Length of residency in West Cambridge
- West Cambridge as a place to live, raise children, and retire
- Quality of life in West Cambridge and expectations
- Top issues of concern in the neighborhood
- Trends regarding grocery shopping and running errands (location and means of transportation)
- Homeownership trends
- Work and School habits (location and means of transportation)
- Preferred method of communication regarding development plans and issues concerning the neighborhood.

A committee member noted that it would help to have benchmarks to compare the survey results to all of Cambridge, as well as to other neighborhoods. There was another question concerning whether Cambridge residents were first employed in the City and decided to live here or vice versa.

Committee Discussion

There were several pieces of information in both presentations that Committee members noted as very interesting and even surprising.

The interest in low and moderate income housing for residents in Neighborhood Ten was noted. There was mixed reaction on the Committee to the apparent level of satisfaction and lack of concerns. Another committee member pointed out the relatively small percentage of residents that reported grocery shopping at Huron Market as opposed to the

Fresh Pond Whole Foods. It was also interesting to a committee member that Neighborhood Ten was noted as a good place to raise children as well as a good place to retire. Someone stated that the increase in the number of younger people and children in the neighborhood did not seem to match the data presented. It was also pointed out that convenience and access were noted as good features of the neighborhood but residents still seemed to be driving most places. In response, it was noted that in West Cambridge, the major shopping centers are not really convenient to walk to. There was surprise that traffic was noted as the number one concern but satisfaction that street repair was important to residents.

It was pointed out in the discussion that the issues of concern for residents will vary among different sub areas of the neighborhood. Someone agreed that the issues are not geographically divided in the data presented, and it would be helpful to have data on resident's concerns as a result of location in neighborhood.

A committee member stated that most surveys overstate older stable homeowners, which should be taken into account. It was also noted that the characteristics of the neighborhood are driven by housing prices. Furthermore, the zoning in place perpetuates the situation that exists. It was agreed that, in many ways, West Cambridge is different than other Cambridge neighborhoods